

## **MEMORANDUM DM 99-08**

DATE: October 1, 1999

TO: All Licensed Coal Mine Operations

FROM: Frank A. Linkous  
Chief, Division of Mines

SUBJECT: Update of Virginia's Mine Foreman Continuing Education Activities

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide you with a status report on the implementation of mine foreman continuing education requirements. These requirements were promulgated by the Board of Coal Mining Examiners in accordance with § 45.1-161.34 of the Coal Mine Safety Laws of Virginia. The August 20, 1997 Board regulations require that coal mine foremen, underground and surface, complete four hours of approved continuing education by August 20, 1999, and at two year intervals thereafter to maintain their certification.

The Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy, Division of Mines has over 12,000 mine foremen listed in certification files. The Division recognized that many of those listed are no longer active in the coal industry. Through August 20, 1999, 1,694 underground and 494 surface mine foremen have completed approved continuing education requirements extending their certification status through August 20, 2001.

**Those foremen not completing training have had their certification suspended, and may not perform any duties of a mine foreman as required by state and federal mining laws. Those mine foremen now in suspension have two years from August 20, 1999, to complete an approved four-hour continuing education course for reinstatement. Failure to do so will result in revocation of their mine foreman certification requiring reapplication and examination the same as for any new mine foreman candidate.**

The first cycle of continuing education training has proven successful. Working with the coal industry, Mountain Empire Community College and Southwest Virginia Community College, the Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy (DMME) developed and helped deliver a high quality training program. Team teaching with the colleges and some larger coal companies, DM instructors conducted 43 classes providing continuing education for 1,674 mine foremen. Other classes have been conducted by the colleges, coal companies, and independent training providers.

**Please see the back of this memorandum for more information.**

Continuing education classes have been advertised and offered at locations throughout the seven county coalfield area. Classes have been offered at varying times and days of the week, including Saturdays and Sundays, to accommodate the needs of mine foremen. News releases concerning continuing education requirements have been generated in the local press and communicated by DM personnel during regular mine site visits. DMME has mailed to the address of record, letters notifying suspension of certifications to approximately 8,000 mine foremen. Some foremen receiving suspension notification have responded, indicating a desire to complete the continuing education for reinstatement. DMME is committed to working with providers of training to assist these foremen in meeting their needs. For information on where and how to obtain continuing education classes, contact the Division of Mines at (540) 523-8227.

The process of attempting to notify mine foremen of suspension of certification has heightened awareness of the need to maintain a *current mailing address*. This is essential for DMME to provide important information to certified persons. Unfortunately, about one third of the letters mailed notifying of suspension have been returned for “insufficient address” or “attempted – unknown”. Help DMME help you by encouraging mine foremen to notify the Division of Mines of changes in address.

Mine operators are required to ensure that only properly certified persons perform duties that require certification. You are encouraged to review and confirm the status of those persons who act as certified mine foremen at your operations. Should you have any questions concerning the current status of a mine foreman, feel free to contact DMME at (540) 523-8149, (540) 523-8234, or ask any Division of Mines Inspector or Specialist.

On behalf of the Board of Coal Mining Examiners and DMME, I wish to express appreciation for the participation and cooperation demonstrated by the vast majority of mine foremen and coal operators in working to meet this continuing education requirement. The training provided will help to prepare and equip foremen to meet the challenges they face daily as they direct the mining of coal safely and efficiently.

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